Dusk Black
The Belfast Surfer
Grok

DUSK BLACK

The Belfast Surfer

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1

Chapter 1: The Disappearance (1970)

Arthur Keane was a name that lingered in the salt air long after the wind swept it away.

In 1970, Belfast, Maine, was a modest coastal town stitched together by fishing lines, timber, and tide. The harbor was its heart—narrow and deep, braced by old piers, warehouses, and gull cries. Fishermen in wool caps shouted over the morning clatter, and lobstermen swore their trade into the churning sea. It was a town of tradition, of early risers and stubborn hands, and no one had much time for dreams—except Arthur.

Arthur Keane wasn't born in Belfast. He arrived one summer when he was twelve, all tan limbs and California swagger, trailing behind a mother who left everything behind after a bitter divorce. His father had drowned in debt and bourbon; her escape had a name: Maine.

To most boys in Belfast, summer was a time for work—gutting fish, fixing nets, mowing the cemetery. But Arthur brought something foreign: a surfboard strapped to the top of their rattling station wagon and a permanent grin that said he wasn't afraid of anything.

"Boy thinks he's in Waikiki," muttered Old Man McGowan the first time he saw Arthur paddling out beyond the dock, a silhouette bobbing in the frigid Atlantic, chasing waves too small to care.

But he kept surfing. Morning after morning. By fall, the locals stopped pointing. By winter, he had a nickname—**"The Phantom Grom."** Nobody his age dared the water that cold. But Arthur? He cut through the frost with grace and defiance.

He was seventeen when people started gathering to watch.

It was early October when the swell came. A nor'easter brewing off Nova Scotia promised a surge. By afternoon, word had spread. A handful of teens gathered at the overlook near the shipyard. Men with thermoses and tobacco watched from trucks.

Arthur stood at the edge of the wharf in a black wetsuit, his board underarm, his blond hair shining damp gold.

"I heard this swell's the biggest we've had in twenty years," said Tommy Flynn, hands shoved in his varsity jacket. "He's gonna break his damn neck."

"He'll be fine," said Marla Reilly. She bit her thumbnail, then added more quietly, "He always is."

Arthur turned toward the watchers once, gave a little salute, and stepped off the edge of the dock.

The wave caught him clean. He dropped in low and cut across its face with a confidence that stunned the crowd. Spray arced off his wake. He kicked out, paddled back, and did it again.

And again.

And then, he didn't.

The sun dipped fast behind the hill. Long shadows spilled across the harbor.

"Where is he?" Marla asked.

No one answered.

The water shimmered under moonrise. Gentle ripples, but no board. No silhouette.

By nightfall, the harbor patrol had been called. Two small boats scanned the water with lamps. Flashlights flicked along the shoreline.

No one found anything.

No board. No wetsuit. No Arthur.

The next morning, divers combed the channel. Drag nets swept the floor. For three days, they searched. The Coast Guard got involved. They interviewed everyone.

"Did he seem distressed?" "No. Just like always."

"Did he ever talk about disappearing?" "No. Arthur loved this place."

A week later, the town called off the search.

Arthur Keane was gone.

The town didn't know what to do with the silence.

His mother stood every evening at the shoreline with a mug of tea and an old sweater. Marla left wildflowers in a jar on the dock. Someone painted his name across the seawall in faded red letters:

"Keane Still Rides."

People made up stories. That he'd hit a rock and sunk. That he swam too far. That he faked it all and left for California, never to return.

But the water never gave up its secret.

That winter, a boy swore he saw a figure walking on the waves at dawn.

The fishermen whispered of strange tides that pulled stronger

at night. Dogs howled near the harbor at odd hours. Seagulls nested where they hadn't before.

Ghost stories began to brew.

A legend was born.

Years passed. New kids were told to stay away from the water after dark. The board Arthur used hung from the ceiling of The Siren's Rest, the pub where old timers drank and remembered.

His name became myth.

But to some—to a few—Arthur Keane was still out there.

Riding the phantom tide.

2

Chapter 2: Belfast's Lost Son

Time has a way of sanding memories down like sea glass—smoothing the sharp edges but keeping the color. By the mid-1980s, Arthur Keane was no longer a lost teenager; he was a local legend, as real to some as Paul Bunyan, as beloved as a lighthouse in a storm.

A mural of him riding a wave adorned the back wall of the old fish market. The artist, a friend of Arthur's named Dale Driscoll, painted it entirely from memory. Local schoolkids were told the story every October: the brave boy who vanished beneath a perfect wave.

Tourists bought postcards with his silhouette on them. "The Ghost Surfer of Belfast Harbor." Some thought it was a marketing gimmick. But for the older locals, it was a wound dressed in salt.

Marla Reilly, once the girl biting her thumbnail on the dock, stayed in Belfast. She never married. Ran the local library. Sometimes, when the fog rolled in thick, she'd pause in the stacks and look toward the harbor, as though expecting to see

him glide past the window.

"I saw him once," she said once to a teenager checking out ghost stories. "Just a flicker. But I know it was him. Same crooked grin. Same blond mess of hair."

The teen nodded politely, the way kids do when adults say things that don't fit.

But Marla never doubted.

Arthur's mother, Eleanor Keane, lived on Sea Rose Hill in the little green cottage they'd moved into back in '58. She became a recluse after the disappearance. Grew roses. Drank black coffee. Kept a photo of Arthur by the window, facing the harbor.

On the anniversary of his vanishing, she lit a lantern at sunset and placed it on her porch. Some years, others joined in. By the 2000s, it became a town ritual.

Lanterns on the harbor. Dozens of them. Floating like fireflies across the dark water.

There were rumors.

Strange ones. Fishermen said their sonar sometimes picked up something large moving deep in the harbor. A young man claimed he heard someone whispering beneath the dock. An old woman swore she saw wet footprints on her porch one morning—a single set, leading away from the water.

Paranormal investigators came in 1997. Left with a single blurry photo of a figure on the waves. It was dismissed as faked.

But the town didn't need evidence.

Arthur Keane had never really left. He was part of Belfast now.

A folk ghost. A boy held in tide and memory.

Then came the girl.

Faline O'Rourke.

She was just a baby when the Twin Towers fell. Grew up in the shadow of fear and the blur of digital noise. But she had something no one could explain—something ancient in her eyes, something the sea seemed to recognize.

By the time she was twelve, she could out-surf boys twice her size. She never spoke much in school, but on the water, she was wild. At sixteen, she was writing poetry about the moon and wind. By eighteen, she was cutting her own boards.

Locals began to whisper.

"She reminds me of him."

Same grin. Same defiance. Same way of looking at the waves like they were whispering secrets.

Some said she was Arthur's soul reborn. Others said she was the one who'd bring him back.

Whatever it was, Faline belonged to the harbor.

And the harbor... had been waiting.

3

Chapter 3: Surf's Hollow Echo

The sea never forgets.

Faline O'Rourke learned this young. At eight years old, she watched a seal die on the rocks near the harbor—its body bloated, eyes dim, a plastic ring embedded in its neck. She cried for hours, not because death was new, but because something so alive could vanish and become still so quickly. That day, she asked her mother to teach her about tides.

Her mother, Maeve, had been a marine biologist once, before bills and grief and loneliness rerouted her into a small-town librarian. She told Faline about currents, how they could drag things from the surface to the seafloor, hide secrets in kelp beds, or carry stories across oceans.

"The sea's a keeper of memory," Maeve said. "It just doesn't always give it back."

Those words etched themselves into Faline like salt into rope.

By the time she turned sixteen, Faline had already memorized the harbor's moods. She knew when the fog would settle before anyone else. She could read the color of the water like an

omen. Blue meant calm. Silver meant cold. Green-gray meant something was about to shift.

Locals were used to seeing her out there, a streak of red board and black wetsuit under gray skies. Some muttered warnings. Others watched quietly. But none ever tried to stop her.

It wasn't just rebellion. It was ritual.

Faline wasn't afraid of the sea. She feared dry land more—crowded stores, shallow talk, the slow churn of a world pretending things were normal when they weren't.

The harbor was honest. Cold. Sharp. But never fake.

In March 2020, when the world began folding in on itself, Faline went out more often.

At first it was small things—school went remote, sports stopped. Then the shops shuttered. The boardwalk emptied. The air changed. Belfast felt like a ghost town again, like it had all those years ago when Arthur vanished.

Only this time, everyone knew something was wrong.

Masks appeared. Hands were washed until raw. People crossed the street to avoid each other.

Faline surfed through it all.

She'd paddle out at sunset, where the air was peach-colored and briney, and whisper into the waves, "I know you're out here."

She wasn't sure who she meant. Maybe Arthur. Maybe the sea itself. Maybe just the part of her that wanted to be swallowed whole.

One afternoon in late April, Faline found herself at the edge of a storm.

The sky was fractured—half light, half fury. Her mother had

warned her not to go out. The wind howled against the glass. But something in Faline stirred like an itch in her bones.

She waxed her board in silence. Pulled on her suit. Grabbed her necklace—the one with the tiny silver wave charm her father had given her before he shipped off for the last time—and walked to the shore.

The waves were wild. Not monstrous, but unruly. The kind you had to earn.

She paddled hard. Cut across the face of a rising breaker. Felt the wind slap her cheeks raw. And in the chaos of it all, she laughed.

The sea was singing to her.

A sharp whistle cut through the gust.

She turned.

For half a second, she saw something out past the reef. A glint. A glimmer. A human shape.

But then it was gone.

That night, she dreamt of Arthur.

She didn't know it was him at first. Just a boy with wet hair and sea-glass eyes, standing on the sand with his board beneath one arm.

"You're not ready yet," he said.

"For what?"

But he was already walking into the waves.

She tried to follow, but her legs were rooted in place.

She woke up gasping.

Outside her window, the wind had stopped. The moon reflected off the harbor like a mirror.

Faline rose, heart still pounding. She stepped barefoot onto the porch and stared at the water.

It stared back.

4

Chapter 4: A Girl Named Faline

Faline O'Rourke was not an ordinary girl. Not even when she tried.

She had her mother's quiet determination and her father's fierce independence. Her hair was the color of sea-drenched copper, often tied back in a braid that frayed with salt. Her eyes were tidewater green—shifting from soft moss to stormy gray, depending on the light.

She rarely smiled for photographs. Not because she was unhappy, but because she hated pretending. Smiles, she believed, should be earned—not expected.

From the moment she could stand, she'd run barefoot toward the ocean. While other toddlers screamed at the cold, she giggled. While other girls played dress-up, Faline buried her toes in tidepools and hunted for sea glass.

Her mother kept every shell she brought home. Every one.

Faline's father, Callum O'Rourke, had gone missing overseas when she was nine. Officially declared KIA in Afghanistan, though there were no remains, no ceremony. Just a folded flag

and a silence that grew wider by the year.

Maeve had retreated inward after that. She functioned—kept the house, made tea, read books—but her voice dimmed. It was as if grief had put her in a thin glass shell. Faline loved her fiercely, but she also hated how fragile everything suddenly seemed.

That was when she turned fully to the water.

She started surfing seriously at ten. Her balance was uncanny. Coaches noticed. So did older surfers who, at first, mocked her small frame—until she out-rode them in swell after swell.

By fifteen, she was a quiet legend of the coast. Not just for her skill, but for her calm.

She never boasted. She never competed. She simply surfed.

And the sea gave her something no person ever could: answers that didn't need words.

She kept journals—not about boys or school, but about waves. Each entry was dated with the tide chart. Some were sketches. Others were pages of poetry, sometimes just one line repeated again and again:

"He's still out there."

Faline didn't know why she wrote that. She didn't even know who *he* was.

But the dream had stirred something in her. That boy with the sea-glass eyes. The cold wind at her window. The shape on the water.

She began researching.

Not schoolwork—surfing lore, local shipwrecks, weather anomalies. She scoured microfilm at the library. Old headlines. One caught her attention:

"Surfer Vanishes: No Trace Found in Belfast Harbor."

Arthur Keane.

Her hands trembled as she read.

The photo was grainy but unmistakable. The boy from her dream.

Same hair. Same grin.

She closed the article and whispered to herself:

"Why did I see him?"

Faline started paddling out at stranger times—twilight, moonrise, just before dawn. The harbor felt different then. Less water, more whisper.

She spoke to the tide, and sometimes it answered—not in words, but in signs.

A warm current on a cold day. A gull circling overhead when the sky was still. Her board gliding more smoothly than it should have.

She knew it sounded crazy. She didn't care.

The sea had chosen her.

And somewhere, she believed, Arthur was waiting.

5

Chapter 5: Pandemic Waters

Spring 2020 turned Belfast, Maine, into a still-life painting.

The ferry horns were silent. The boardwalk, where elderly couples used to stroll after dinner, stood empty, gulls claiming benches like thrones. Shops were locked. School was a virtual grid of frozen faces and glitching voices. The harbor, once animated with sailboats and chatter, became a mirror—flat, reflective, oddly watchful.

The town moved slower. The air felt heavier. Even the tides seemed to rise and fall more reluctantly.

To Faline, it was as if the world was taking one long, collective breath—and forgetting how to exhale.

Maeve kept busy with puzzles and books. She cooked elaborate meals that neither of them finished. They watched the news together until the numbers became too much. After that, Faline would walk the shore alone until nightfall, her board under one arm, listening.

Everyone had their way of coping. Faline's was the ocean.

Each evening, she suited up in the garage and jogged barefoot

across the sand. She paddled out into the harbor like she always had—but now the silence was louder. Now the water felt like it was keeping secrets.

One dusk in May, a fog settled so thick that the boardwalk vanished behind her before she reached the breakers. She stopped paddling and let the tide carry her, drifting alone in a world without edges.

And that's when she heard the whisper.

Not a word. Not a voice. Just the sound of her name caught in the current, like breath through a shell.

"Faline..."

She turned.

Nothing. Just the hush of moving water.

But the whisper had weight. It wasn't imagined. It wasn't wind.

That night she didn't sleep.

The days blurred.

Faline marked time by the moon instead of the calendar. Full moon brought strong tides. New moon made the water feel hollow. Her journals filled with tide tables and tide dreams. She no longer watched the clock. She watched the swells.

One morning, she woke before dawn, heart racing.

A boy was in her dream again—Arthur. This time, he wasn't standing on the shore. He was in the water, paddling beside her. Silent. Present.

When she looked over, he didn't smile. He only lifted a hand and pointed.

To the lighthouse.

She sat up in bed, breathing heavy.

Outside, waves pounded harder than usual. A storm was

brewing.

She waited until nightfall to return to the harbor.

Maeve stood on the porch in a cardigan, arms crossed. "Please don't go out in this."

"I'll stay close," Faline promised, knowing she wouldn't.

The sea roared. Rain spit sideways. But something in her feet—something ancient—moved her forward. She paddled through choppy water, past the dock, past the reef, past reason.

The lighthouse beam cut the mist like a metronome.

Flash.

Dark.

Flash.

Each pulse felt like a heartbeat.

And then—

A shape, rising out of the spray.

A figure on a board.

Faline froze, clutching the sides of her own.

He was there. Not translucent. Not imagined. A boy, balanced perfectly, riding a wave that came from nowhere. His eyes—sea-glass green. His hair, slicked to the side. His board, old but steady.

Arthur.

The wave curled around him like a question mark.

And just as he reached her—

He vanished.

6

Chapter 6: The Dare

"You should've seen her," said Nate Garland, leaning back in a folding chair on his porch. "Out there in the storm like she was made of steel."

"Or sea foam," chuckled his older sister, Harper. "She's always been part fish."

Nate nodded, but there was something wary in his eyes.

Word of Faline's surf during the worst squall of spring spread fast. Belfast was a small town. Nothing stayed secret long—especially not legends in the making.

Some said she was chasing ghosts. Others said she was losing her mind.

Faline said nothing.

The morning after the storm, she sat at the edge of the jetty with her notebook. She sketched what she saw: Arthur on the wave. Every detail she could remember. The thickness of his wetsuit. The curve of the board. The look in his eyes.

He wasn't surprised to see me.

She circled the sentence three times.

That night, she returned to the harbor, not to surf, but to watch. She climbed the old lifeguard tower and sat with a thermos of coffee, the same way Arthur's friends had waited for him fifty years ago.

The wind picked up. The tide came in. Nothing happened.

She kept waiting.

Two days later, she dared herself to speak to someone—someone who might understand.

She knocked on the Reillys' door. Marla Reilly answered, older now, in a thick sweater and with reading glasses perched on her head.

"I read about you," Marla said before Faline could speak. "Or rather, *I dreamed about you*. Come in."

Faline followed her into the house. It smelled like cinnamon and sea air. Books were stacked on every flat surface.

"You knew Arthur Keane," Faline said.

Marla's eyes darkened with memory. "Knew him better than anyone. He was my first love, though he never knew it. Or maybe he did."

"I think I saw him," Faline whispered. "Not in a dream. On the water."

Marla sat down slowly, as if the words carried physical weight.

"I believe you."

Faline blinked. "You do?"

"I've seen him too."

The two of them talked for hours. Marla pulled out a dusty scrapbook filled with photos and clippings. Arthur's crooked smile peeked out from nearly every page.

"There's something strange about you," Marla said. "You

remind me of him. Like you've got the same storm in your blood."

Faline showed her the sketch. Marla nodded slowly. "That's him. Even after all these years, I'd know him anywhere."

Then she added, "You know, the tide around here—when it changes in spring, there's a moment. A quiet slip between in and out. That's when you'll see him again. If you dare."

Faline swallowed. "I dare."

That night, Faline paddled out at slack tide. The water was strangely warm. The stars shimmered.

She drifted. Waiting.

And then—

Another board bumped hers.

Arthur. Floating beside her like he belonged there.

"You came back," he said.

"I never left," she replied.

They floated, silent. Then Arthur looked toward the horizon.

"You have to choose soon."

"Choose what?"

But he was already fading.

Faline screamed his name.

Only the waves answered.

7

Chapter 7: Midnight Break

The next morning, Faline didn't speak. Not to Maeve. Not to the seagulls on the railing. Not even to the tide.

She kept replaying it—Arthur's face, his voice, the warning she didn't understand.

You have to choose soon.

Choose what? Life or death? Memory or forgetting? Staying or going?

She didn't know.

But she felt it: something had shifted. Like the tide had turned beneath her feet.

She skipped her online classes and walked into town. The streets were still mostly empty. Chalk drawings from the early lockdown days had faded on the sidewalks—rainbows and "We're all in this together" slogans smeared like old paint. The town was hollow now, its heartbeat slowed.

The hardware store was shuttered. The coffee shop had a sign in the window: *Temporarily Closed Until We Know More.*

She walked by the harbor lookout. The same spot Arthur had

once waited on. It felt like retracing steps in someone else's dream.

At the library, Marla was waiting.

"I knew you'd come back," she said. "They always do, after the second sighting."

"Has this happened before?"

Marla hesitated, fingers tightening on the spine of a book.

"Only once. 1993. A boy named Eli saw Arthur, just like you. But he was afraid. He left town two weeks later and never returned."

Faline felt a chill dance along her skin. "But Arthur didn't talk to him, did he?"

"No," Marla said. "He didn't."

That night, Faline returned to the jetty—but not to surf.

She brought a red scarf and tied it to the railing.

A signal.

An invitation.

She waited. An hour passed. The wind picked up, brushing the water with long fingers.

And then she heard it. Not footsteps, but the sound of air shifting. A pressure change in the atmosphere.

Arthur.

He stood beside her like he belonged to the shadows. Salt glistened in his hair. His presence didn't chill her—it anchored her.

"I need to understand," she said.

"You will," he answered. "But not here. Not yet."

He offered her his hand.

She reached—but he was already fading.

The scarf snapped in the wind.

8

Chapter 8: The Cold Wave

Chapter 7: Midnight Break

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"You will," he answered. "But not here. Not yet."

He offered her his hand.
She reached—but he was already fading.
The scarf snapped in the wind.

Chapter 8: The Cold Wave

9

Chapter 9: Phantom on the Water

Faline didn't wait until night.

She paddled out mid-afternoon, under a silver sky. The tide was turning. Marla had told her to watch for the in-between—the slack, the breathless second between flood and ebb.

She hovered there, boardside, motionless.

A light drizzle began to fall, kissing the ocean's skin.

And then—there he was.

Arthur appeared beside her, clearer than ever before. Sunlight glinted off the edge of his board. His wetsuit was dry. His presence was not.

His voice was smaller this time. "I shouldn't be here," he said. "Not this long."

"Why are you?"

He looked at her, eyes full of loss and longing.

"Because you pulled me closer."

She didn't understand. Not fully. But she felt it—like the harbor was drawing them both inward.

The clouds parted briefly, and in that narrow shaft of light, the water shimmered.

"Tell me what's happening," she said.

Arthur looked toward the horizon. "You have to see it to understand. I've been trapped. Not by death. By memory."

"What does that mean?"

"There's a place... below. Where time folds. Where sound is slower and light forgets itself."

She reached toward him.

He didn't vanish.

Instead, the water around them shifted.

Rings of bubbles rose in silence. Her board tilted slightly.

And then, the water shimmered—and they both sank beneath it.

Not drowning.

Descending.

Together.

10

Chapter 10: Sea-Glass Eyes

Faline didn't panic. Not when the water rose past her knees. Not when the surface broke over her head. Not even when the harbor floor dissolved into a violet, glowing dark.

She let it happen.

Arthur's hand held hers. He didn't swim. He drifted. They drifted. Downward, not like sinking, but like falling into the breath between thoughts.

The water wasn't cold. Not anymore. It pulsed around them like a heartbeat. Slow. Strong. Familiar.

Shapes began to form in the deep—ruins of boats that never made it home, fishing traps overgrown with seaweed, bicycles rusted into sculptures. And there, carved into the rock below them, were spirals.

Ancient.

"Where are we?" she asked.

Arthur looked at her, his sea-glass eyes glowing faintly in the dark. "Where memory sinks when the world stops looking."

The spirals lit up softly as they descended. And in the stillness, she began to hear them—voices.

Soft, like a choir echoing through a cave.

Names.

Hundreds of names whispered in the current. All the lost ones. All the ones the town had buried without closure.

She heard Arthur's name last.

And then—her own.

She gasped. Bubbles rose and twisted like jellyfish.

"Why me?" she whispered.

Arthur looked back. "Because you never stopped listening."

11

Chapter 11: A Haunting Familiarity

They drifted to a ledge in the underwater ruins. It looked almost like a dock, overgrown with coral and swaying kelp. Arthur stood on it like it was his home.

"You said you were trapped," she said.

He nodded. "I was. I am. It's hard to explain. There's a current in this place—a tide of time. It caught me when I fell."

"When you drowned?"

Arthur shook his head. "I didn't drown. Not exactly. I disappeared. I surfed into a storm and the wave never let me go. Not completely. It pulled me here."

Faline touched the stone beneath her. It hummed with memory.

"So why can I see you?"

Arthur met her eyes. "Because you're halfway here already. You've been surfing on memory since you were a kid. You see what the rest forget."

They sat in silence, the tide pushing against their bodies like a slow breath.

"Is this where the dead go?" she asked.

"No," he said. "Just the forgotten."

Above them, the water shimmered with light.

Faline rose to the surface slowly, gasping when she broke through.

It was dawn. Her board had drifted yards away, but still floated.

Arthur surfaced next to her, glancing at the sky. "Your time's short now."

"I'll come back," she said.

He didn't smile. "You always say that."

Then he vanished beneath the surface.

12

Chapter 12: Salt and Shadows

Faline dragged her board to shore, soaked to the bone, hair tangled like seaweed. Her journal lay open on the porch where she'd left it. Pages fluttered.

Maeve stood in the doorway, wrapped in her old brown coat.

"I saw you out there," she said. "In the tide."

Faline flinched. "You watched me?"

Maeve nodded. "I had to. You were almost gone."

"I wasn't gone," Faline whispered. "I was deeper."

They sat together on the porch step.

Maeve stared out toward the harbor. "When your father went missing, I used to dream about him. Standing at the end of the dock. Reaching. Never speaking."

Faline looked at her. "What happened to him?"

Maeve's jaw trembled. "I don't know. Nobody does. Just like Arthur."

A silence passed. Deeper than grief. The silence of two women holding on to ghosts.

That night, Faline left the house again. This time, Maeve didn't

stop her. She even handed her a red scarf.

"For luck," she said.

Faline paddled out again, the scarf tied around her wrist.

Waiting.

But Arthur didn't come.

Instead, the tide whispered something else.

Another name.

Eli.

13

Chapter 13: Voice of the Tide

Faline searched through library records the next morning. Marla helped.

"Eli Marchand," Marla said. "He saw Arthur. Tried to tell the town. Got sent away to live with an uncle in New Hampshire. Never came back."

Faline found a newspaper clipping: *LOCAL BOY CLAIMS TO SEE GHOST—Dismissed as Stress Reaction.*

The headline made her stomach churn.

"He wasn't lying," she said.

"No," Marla agreed. "But the world wasn't ready to listen."

Faline returned to the jetty that night and shouted into the sea.

"I believe you, Eli!"

The wind shifted. A gull shrieked overhead. The tide shimmered.

A boy's voice echoed faintly back.

"Tell them I didn't imagine it."

She gasped.

"Tell them I saw him too."

Arthur wasn't the only ghost in the harbor. The tide was full of names.

Eli.

Callum.

Others she didn't know yet.

She wrote every one she heard in her journal that night.

14

Chapter 14: The Boardwalk Confession

Word spread.

Not of ghosts, but of Faline. Of the red-scarfed girl who surfed storms and talked to the sea. Fishermen started leaving small stones at the end of the jetty. Children whispered stories about her under their breath.

Maeve said nothing. But she lit a candle in the window every night now.

Faline kept going back.

She wrote letters and dropped them into bottles.

She whispered names and listened.

One night, she found a man sitting on the boardwalk. Old, with white hair and a cane.

"Are you the one who hears them?" he asked.

Faline nodded.

"I'm Owen. Arthur's brother."

She sat down beside him, stunned.

"I knew he wasn't gone. Not really," Owen said. "But it wasn't until I saw you that I believed it."

"I think he's still waiting," Faline said.

Owen nodded. “Then help him come home.”
Faline stood up and stared at the sea. “I will.”

15

Chapter 15: Letters in a Bottle

Faline's letters floated beneath the moonlight, each message a fragile hope cast into the harbor's endless tides. Sometimes she sent them out with a prayer, other times with a plea—words meant for Arthur, for Eli, for anyone who listened. The harbor answered in silence, but the whispers grew louder in her heart.

One evening, a letter came back—not in a bottle, but in a hand-written note left by the old lighthouse keeper. It spoke of secrets buried beneath the waves and the unspoken bond between those who vanish and those who remain.

Faline realized her journey was bigger than a ghost story—it was about remembering, reckoning, and healing.

16

Chapter 16: The Widow McGowan

Maeve revealed a hidden chapter from her past—the widow McGowan, who had known Arthur before he disappeared. Her stories were woven with loss and resilience, and her warnings weighed heavily on Faline's soul.

The widow's home, cluttered with maritime relics and faded photographs, became a sanctuary for Faline, a place where past and present whispered side by side.

17

Chapter 17: Arthur's Truth

Faline uncovered Arthur's journal, a weathered book with pages stained by salt and time. His thoughts painted a portrait of a man torn between love and an unexplainable pull to the sea—a force that ultimately claimed him.

The journal's final entry hinted at a choice Arthur never made, a secret kept between the tides.

18

Chapter 18: Rip Current

A sudden rip current caught Faline while surfing one gray afternoon—a force both terrifying and strangely familiar. Struggling against it, she glimpsed visions of Arthur, Eli, and others, all trapped in a watery limbo.

It was a warning: the harbor's hold was growing stronger, and time was running out for both the living and the lost.

19

Chapter 19: Faline's Calling

Faline understood that her destiny was intertwined with Arthur's fate and the harbor's mysteries. Her surfing was no longer just a passion—it was a calling.

With renewed determination, she prepared to face the unknown, ready to cross the boundary between this world and the next, and to bring peace to Belfast's restless spirits.

20

Chapter 20: Between Two Tides

Faline stood at the harbor's edge, feeling the pull of two worlds—the solid earth beneath her feet and the shimmering realm beneath the waves. The air smelled of salt and old secrets.

Marla warned her that crossing the threshold twice could be dangerous, but Faline was ready. The tide was shifting, and so was she.

21

Chapter 21: The Storm Surge

A violent storm rolled into Belfast Harbor, thrashing waves like angry fists. Faline paddled out despite the danger, the wind tearing at her wetsuit, the rain blurring her vision.

In the heart of the tempest, Arthur appeared beside her, steady as ever. The storm was no longer a threat—it was a bridge.

22

Chapter 22: Sea Trials

Chapter 22: Sea Trials

Arthur led Faline through underwater caverns and ancient shipwrecks, places where the past lingered like fog.

She faced visions of those lost, of choices made and unmade. Each trial tested her resolve and her heart.

23

Chapter 23: The Town Remembers

Back on shore, the townspeople gathered for an impromptu vigil. Stories long forgotten were shared aloud, healing old wounds and lighting lanterns against the darkness.

Faline watched as the community began to reclaim its history, one memory at a time.

24

Chapter 24: Ghost in the Curl

Surfing the dawn waves, Faline saw Arthur again—this time clearer than ever. They rode the curl together, a dance of light and shadow.

She realized that some ghosts don't haunt—they guide.

25

Chapter 25: Letting Go

With a heavy heart, Faline made peace with the harbor's pull. She understood that some mysteries weren't meant to be solved, only embraced.

Letting go was harder than holding on, but it was necessary.

26

Chapter 26: The Second Vanishing

On a fog-laden night, Faline vanished beneath the waves, just as Arthur had fifty years before. The town held its breath.

27

Chapter 27: The Harbor Still Watches

Days passed. Then weeks. The harbor remained still, as if holding its secrets close.

But at dawn, a single red scarf floated to shore—an echo, a promise, a beginning.

28

Chapter 28: Epilogue: Surf's End

Maeve stood at the harbor, eyes scanning the horizon. The sea was calm now.

A young girl approached, surfboard under arm, eyes bright with the same storm in her blood.

The cycle continued.

About the Author

Dusk Black is a passionate storyteller who finds magic in weaving tales that explore the mysterious and the unseen. With a deep love for writing books, Dusk crafts stories that invite readers into worlds where the ordinary meets the extraordinary. When not lost in words, Dusk enjoys surfing the edges of imagination and exploring the quiet whispers of forgotten places. The Belfast Surfer is a journey into the heart of mystery, memory, and the enduring power of the human spirit.